

Duxbury Clipper
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The Clipper celebrates 65 years of news

On May 11, 1950, the first issue of the Duxbury Clipper was published. Here's a look back at the Clipper throughout the years. Read more starting on page 8.



Right: The first issue of the Duxbury Clipper.

The Clipper's 65th Anniversary

Looking back on over forty years of frantic Tuesdays

BY BOBBIE CUTLER

(THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE EXCERPT ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE MAY 31, 1990

DUXBURY CLIPPER 40TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE AND REPRINTED IN THE MAY 10, 2000 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE.)

It is gratifying to be appreciated and to have an entire Town Meeting Selectmen, FinCom, and all the notables of Duxbury thank you for a job you've been at for the past 40 years. And a job which has given so much pleasure to its editors that it never seemed like dreary day to day work, but mostly fun. True, there has been stress, disappointment, criticism, hard work, long hours, sleepless nights — wondering if you had remembered to put Mrs. So and so's ad on page 5 or 6, or if your "continued's" were in the right place. For if a front page story were continued to the wrong page, who would find it? Who would bother? On Wednesday mornings you rush to the office, grab a Clipper, and give it the onceover, heart sinking as you find the errors you hoped to avoid. The wrong caption. It's not Mary but Joan who headed the Garden Club, and you groan when the phone rings later and the complaints come in. Where is my classified? I'm having a yard sale and it is not in the paper. I told you to take out that classified, I sold the car two weeks ago and my phone has been ringing ever since. My Clipper did not come for the second week, where is it? A call from California, "Where is my Clipper?" A call from Boston, "I'm getting two Clippers and one is sufficient," and bang goes down the phone. Often I wish I could not be here the day the Clipper hits the stands to miss the complaints. But all in all, the pleasure of running a weekly in a town like Duxbury is supreme.

Mondays and Tuesdays, when the bulk of the copy comes in, you meet folks from all over town. Polite, caring people who are grateful for our accepting what they have written. Newcomer appears, wanting to subscribe.

"I moved in yesterday and I understand I must subscribe to the Clipper."

Starting out

Looking back over 40 years and thinking of the wonderful staff the Clipper has always had, how could we have published it without them.

In 1950, when the idea of starting a weekly in Duxbury first occurred to us, we of course knew nothing about newspapering. John, of course, had been editor of the 5th Army Corps News when an Army private, of the South Atlantic News, when a Navy Lt., and had written two syndicated columns and many magazine and newspaper columns, but what did he know of putting out a weekly — nothing at all. We merely wanted to get the news of what was happening in Duxbury out to the then only just under 3,000 year-round residents. But how to do it we had no idea. The summer before, John and our neighbor Arthur Beane had been in charge of floats for the Fourth of July parade and I had helped call the various organizations in town. Never did we realize there were so many, nearly 100 clubs including The Squeaky Scissors Club, the Nameless Group (of which we were active members), the Grange, Scouts, Legion, Garden Club, and many more. Yet no one knew of the activities of these groups. Clubs and stores sent penny postcards to boxholders giving news of meeting, of sales. Barnes Market (now Duxbury Wine and Spirits) might send a postcard giving prices of steak, frozen peas and scotch. Even after the Clipper started, the Garden Club kept sending postcards until finally they decided to put a notice in the Clipper of their monthly meetings. The first issue of six pages — yes we folded the pages, inserting a single page — came out on Thursday, May 11, 1950. We mailed all 1,200 copies to every boxholder and at mailtime hung around the Post Office, watching people opening the paper and noted their expressions. There was no mention of John or Bobbie Cutler in that first issue, but the front page story was one of great importance — the state had been trying to take over our beach and several hundred residents had gone to the State House to protest. This made good reading. Of course the state did not then and though the threat has always been there, there has not since been such a concerted effort to do so. Duxbury people were so receptive to the new weekly, once they knew who was behind it. Oliver Rodman and son volunteered a column and Linc Dow offered a column, "Baysides," about boating.

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Edward Mallowney suggested small items about people which we included in a column called "Around Town." Many brought in memories of earlier days in Duxbury. Many of them were excellent writers and not a word could be changed. Some of the writers were Dr. Alice Bigelow, Stuart Huckins, Sabina Marshall, Margaret Metcalf, Cid Ricketts Sumner, Fisher Ames, Gershom Bradford, Henry Cragin Walker, Joe Lund and Alison Arnold... Would I rather be doing something else? No, this is the most challenging life anyone could lead, the most varied, with something new happening every day. New issues come up new people come to town, new problems to be solved. No day is the same as the day before... We love our work on the Clipper, we love those who work with us, and we love our building at 11 South Station Street. The floor is covered with scraps of paper sticking to it and at a glance things seem in disarray most of the time, but we sometimes know where things are. We love the evergreen trees on either side of the building, which Elden Wadsworth planted when he owned the building. We now have an affable electrician in the rear quarters, which is handy if we have electrical problems and convenient as we don't have to pay travel time.

We are happy if what we do pleases the majority of people who read our paper and hope that we can keep on Clippering until the next generation takes over. We have recently learned that a college-bound grandson is interested in journalism, and that makes us very happy, so perhaps the Clipper will always be in the hands of one of the original descendants.

(This article was first published in 1990 – Ed.)